

October 1, 2025    Volume 4, Issue 10

# Thrive

with Project New Hope



## Who Am I Without the Uniform? 1-2

October is  
Mental Health  
Screening Month

\*\*\* SINCE 1775 \*\*\*  
**U.S. NAVY BIRTHDAY**  


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# Who Am I Without the Uniform?

There's a particular kind of quiet that comes after service. Not the peace and calm people might expect, but the quiet that follows the end of something big. The quiet that makes you look around and wonder, now what?

For many Veterans, this question isn't hypothetical. It's deeply personal. When the uniform comes off, and the structure of military life fades, you're left with space that's not always easy to fill. Some fill it with family, while others fill it with work or service in new ways. But for many, there's a lingering sense of something missing. And that's something we need to talk about more often.

## **The Transition Is Real, and Hard**

Each year, roughly 200,000 service members separate from the U.S. military and step into civilian life. Some leave with a plan and support, others step out with uncertainty and questions. For post-9/11 Veterans, about 44 percent said they had difficulty readjusting to civilian life, according to a report by the Pew Research Center. The reasons vary. Some struggled to find stable work. Others missed the camaraderie. Many faced the lasting effects of physical or emotional trauma. But at the core of it, a lot of Veterans were wrestling with something more challenging to name, a loss of identity.

## **Letting Go of the Role, Not the Person**

In the military, your role is clear. You know where to be, what is expected, and who has your back. There is order. There is a purpose. When that ends, the world opens up in ways that are both freeing and disorienting. One Veteran described it like this: "I had a name and a purpose every single day. Out here, no one knows what I've done or what I've carried. I'm proud, but I also feel invisible." That sense of invisibility can hit hard. For some, it starts after retirement. For others, it comes after their first job post-service doesn't pan out. It can happen slowly or all at once. How do we deal with this form of loss? Recognize that you're still the same person who wore the uniform, just heading down a different path now.

## **You Are Not Alone in This**

The Bob Woodruff Foundation, which focuses on supporting post-9/11 Veterans, has studied this transition closely. Their research shows that many Veterans feel unprepared for the emotional and social shift that comes after military life. While job training and housing are essential, they're only part of the puzzle. A large number of Veterans report feeling disconnected, unsure of where they belong, and uncertain about who they are without their military role.

And it's not just a matter of time. The disconnected feeling or a sense of not belonging anymore can last for years, especially when it remains unspoken due to pride or a false sense of appropriate behavior. This is why community and connection are so vital to your transition.

## **At Project New Hope, We Walk Beside You**

We don't pretend to have all the answers. What we do have is a safe space for Veterans to sort through the pieces, rediscover their purpose, and reconnect with themselves. Our retreats, events, and Coffee Socials are more than activities. They are opportunities to show up without having to perform. They are built around authentic experiences, real healing, and real people who understand what it's like to be in between chapters. Whether you're exploring who you are beyond your rank or trying to rebuild a sense of direction, these programs give room to breathe. We also offer trauma-informed healing through The Cortina Method, as well as practical resources like Sully's Food & Baby Pantry, because healing often starts with stability.

# Who Am I Without the Uniform?

(continued)

## What Does Purpose Look Like Now?

Let's be clear, purpose doesn't have to look like a career. It doesn't need to come with a title or paycheck. Sometimes it shows up in the way you support your neighbors, how you show up for your family, or how you volunteer in your community.

We've seen Veterans become mentors, start gardens, lead food drives, run coffee socials, or simply be the one who picks up the phone when another Vet is struggling. These acts aren't small. They are what keep us going.

And for some, purpose may look like rest. Slowing down after years of service is not a sign of laziness. It's restoration. You've done more than enough to earn that.

## You're Still in There

If you've been feeling disconnected lately, here are a few gentle reminders:

- Your worth was never tied to your rank
- You don't need to be "on" all the time.
- You are not broken, even if you feel lost.
- You still have more to give, even if it looks different now.

One way to reconnect with yourself is by reflecting. Try writing down your thoughts, or talk with someone you trust. Join us for a Coffee Social, where you can sit with people who've walked the same path. No pressure, no performance – just a place to be real.

## This Chapter Counts Too

We often talk about legacy as if it's something already written. But for Veterans, the story doesn't end when the uniform comes off. It just shifts. You may not have a clear answer yet to the question, 'Who am I without the uniform?' That's OK. It's a question worth asking, and it's one you don't have to answer alone.

At Project New Hope, we believe in the value of every chapter. We're not here to "fix" you. We're here to walk beside you as you figure out what's next, in your own way and at your own pace. Take the next step, whatever that may look like for you. You've carried more than most, and you are still someone with strength, dignity, and purpose.

And if no one has said it lately, let us be the ones to say it now: thank you for your service, and welcome home.





# Operation Jeepers Christmas

(continued)

## Operation Jeepers Christmas 2024 – Registration Now Open

Project New Hope is honored to support Military and Veteran families through Operation Jeepers Christmas, our annual adopt-a-family program that brings holiday joy to children.

### For Families

Registration is now open for Military and Veteran families with children up to age 17. Priority will be given to families who are new to the program. Proof of service and children's ages is required. Once registered, families will be connected with sponsors who will provide gifts from each child's wish list. Gifts will be available for pick up at our Worcester, MA or Westfield, MA locations.



### For Sponsors

By registering as a sponsor, you can make the holidays brighter for children of those who serve. Sponsors will be matched with a family's wish list and can ensure gifts are ready for pick up in time for Christmas. Your generosity helps children experience the joy of the season, even when their loved ones may be away from home.

**Registration Period: September 29 – November 3, 2025**

Gift Pickup Locations: Worcester, MA or Westfield, MA

### Operation Jeepers Christmas

Project New Hope's Operation Jeepers Christmas helps to make the holiday a little brighter for the Children of those who serve, who sometimes spend Christmas without their loved ones.

This adopt-a-family program is open to any Military or Veteran Family with Children up to age 17. Proof of Veteran Status, Military Service, and proof of dependents' age are required (copies of birth certificates are destroyed once verified).

**Priority will be given to Families who are new to the program.**



**Register Today!**

Gifts will be available for pick up at our Worcester, MA or Westfield, MA locations. You can select your location on the registration form.

Our sponsors will adopt the immediate Children of our Military and Veteran Families and you can pick up gifts in time for Christmas!

If you would like to register your Children, fill out the form **HERE** or type this link into your web browser:  
<https://www.projectnewhopema.org/veterans-support-programs/operation-jeepers-christmas/>

**Registration opens 9/29/2025 and closes 11/3/2025**

[www.projectnewhopema.org](http://www.projectnewhopema.org)

### Operation Jeepers Christmas



Project New Hope's Operation Jeepers Christmas helps to make the holiday a little brighter for the Children of those who serve, who sometimes spend Christmas without their loved ones.

**Become a Sponsor Today!**

Help us to help these Families during the joyous holiday season by registering as a Jeepers Christmas Sponsor today!

Your help is always needed and appreciated.

If you are interested in donating at one of our locations, Worcester, MA or Westfield, MA, please contact Susan Wilder at [smwilder@projectnewhopema.org](mailto:smwilder@projectnewhopema.org) or (508) 762-9738.

Project New Hope helps you give to Children of Veterans up to age 17. Once you are registered as a sponsor, our staff will contact you with the "wish list" for the child or children within the Family.

[www.projectnewhopema.org](http://www.projectnewhopema.org)



# TURKEYS FOR VETS

## WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT

Project New Hope Inc. is collecting \$20 supermarket gift cards (Price Chopper/Market 32, Stop & Shop, Big Y, Shaw's, Walmart, etc.) to provide each client of Sully's Veterans Food Pantry with the ability to select the meat of their choice — turkey, ham, fish, or other — accommodating cultural preferences and dietary needs.

We will also provide traditional Thanksgiving fixings — stuffing, potatoes, vegetables, cranberry sauce, and more — so every Veteran household can enjoy a complete holiday meal.

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Project New Hope Inc. is collecting **\$20 supermarket gift cards** (Price Chopper/Market 32, Stop & Shop, Big Y, Shaw's, Walmart, etc.) to select the meat of their choice

We provide traditional Thanksgiving fixings to each client of Sully's Veterans Food Pantry along with a gift card to purchase the meat that best meets their needs.

### **DROP-OFF / MAIL DONATIONS:**

Project New Hope Inc.  
70 James Street, Suite 129A  
Worcester, MA 01603

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# October is Mental Health Screening Month

October is National Depression and Mental Health Screening Month, a time to remind our Veteran community that no one is alone. Mental health challenges can affect anyone, regardless of rank, branch, or the number of years since leaving service. Caring for mental well-being is just as important as caring for physical health.

## **The Importance of Mental Health Check-Ins**

Veterans, you and your brothers and sisters in arms silently carry the weight of your service, whether from combat stress, military sexual trauma, moral injury, or the challenges of transitioning to civilian life. Without support and someone to share these burdens, your struggles can lead to depression, anxiety, substance use, or even suicide.

According to the Department of Veterans Affairs, we continue to lose far too many Veterans each day to suicide. The encouraging news is that help is available and effective. Early screening and timely treatment save lives.

## **How We Can All Make a Difference**

- **Reach Out:** A phone call, text, or coffee chat can ease the isolation a Veteran may be experiencing.
- **Listen Without Judgment:** Sometimes, the most powerful support is simply being present and hearing someone's story.
- **Encourage Professional Help:** Share resources such as the VA, Vet Centers, or Project New Hope retreats, where Veterans and families find strength and hope.

## **Key Resources**

- 988 + Press 1: Veterans Crisis Line, a confidential and available 24/7 service.
- VA Mental Health Services: <https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov>
- Project New Hope Inc.: Programs and retreats that help Veterans, Service Members, and First Responders rebuild their lives with peer support and practical tools. Learn more at <https://www.projectnewhopema.org>.

## **A Message of Hope**

If you are struggling, know that there is no shame in seeking help. Reaching out is a sign of strength. As a community, we can save lives and ensure that every Veteran feels valued, supported, and never forgotten.

# Mark Your Calendar: October 2025

- Oct. 3** – Veterans Farmers Market, Worcester VA Clinic, 403 Belmont St, Worcester, MA 01604, 11:00 am – 1:00 pm
- Oct. 4** – Sully's Pantry Pick-up, Worcester Sully's Pantry, 70 James Street, Suite 129A, Worcester, MA 01603
- Oct. 6** – Chair Massage with Delaney, Worcester Sully's Pantry, 70 James Street, Suite 129A, Worcester, MA 01603, 5:00 pm – 7:00 pm, by appointment (774) 243-7859
- Oct. 11** – VA Claims Assistance, Worcester Sully's Pantry, 70 James Street, Suite 129A, Worcester, MA 01603
- Oct. 12** – Friends & Family Get Together, 26<sup>th</sup> MEB, 26<sup>th</sup> SIG, 182 MCAS, Vernon Hill Am. Legion Post 435, 267 Providence Street, Worcester, MA 01607, 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm
- Oct. 14** – Coffee Social – Worcester, Worcester Sully's Pantry, 70 James Street, Suite 129A, Worcester, MA 01603, 8:30 am – 10:30 am
- Oct. 16** – Coffee Social – Westfield, 1029 North Road, Rt 202, Westfield, MA 01085, 9:00 am – 10:30 am
- Oct. 17** – Veterans Farmers Market, Worcester VA Clinic, 403 Belmont St, Worcester, MA 01604, 11:00 am – 1:00 pm
- Oct. 18** – Sully's Pantry Pick-up, Worcester Sully's Pantry, 70 James Street, Suite 129A, Worcester, MA 01603
- Oct. 21** – Coffee Social – Worcester, Worcester Sully's Pantry, 70 James Street, Suite 129A, Worcester, MA 01603, 8:30 am – 10:30 am
- Oct. 21** – Operation Vitality: Protein, Calories & Fiber, Worcester Sully's Pantry, 70 James Street, Suite 129A, Worcester, MA. 9:30 am
- Oct. 22** – Reflexology, Worcester Sully's Pantry, 70 James Street, Suite 129A, Worcester, MA 01603, 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm, by appointment (774) 243-7859
- Oct. 25** – Trunk or Treat, Vernon Hill American Legion Post 435, 267 Providence Street, Worcester, MA 01607, Kids 5:00-7:00 pm, Adults 8:00-11:00 pm.
- Oct. 28** – Coffee Social – Worcester, Worcester Sully's Pantry, 70 James Street, Suite 129A, Worcester, MA 01603, 8:30 am – 10:30 am
- Oct. 31** – Veterans Farmers Market, Worcester VA Clinic, 403 Belmont St, Worcester, MA 01604, 11:00 am – 1:00 pm

[www.projectnewhopema.org](http://www.projectnewhopema.org)





## Worcester Spotlights

### Veteran Jim Howard

Jim Howard began his service in 1952, joining the Naval Reserve at age 17 before moving into active duty during the Korean War. He later served in Guam, the U.S. Coast Guard, and the Army Reserves, completing nearly two decades in uniform across multiple branches. After his military career, Jim remained active in the Veteran community, serving as Commander of American Legion Post 391 in Charlton in 1976 and again in 2018. Service runs deep in his family, with three of his siblings also serving, including two brothers who were WWII Veterans.



### Volunteer Rich Waddell

Rich began volunteering with PNH this summer and has quickly become someone we can count on at a moment's notice. He proudly served in the U.S. Air Force from 1984 to 1988. Today, Rich continues his service by giving back to the Veteran community, always ready to lend a hand where it is needed most.



# Westfield Spotlight

## Veteran Norman Jones

Norman Jones served his country across three branches: the Army, Air Force, and National Guard. From 1946 to 1987, his career took him to Korea, Turkey, and Amarillo, where he worked as a Combat Engineer. His more than four decades of service reflect deep dedication and resilience. Norman's story stands as a powerful reminder of the many paths of military service.



## Volunteer Doris Theroux

Doris Theroux joined Project New Hope in January 2025 and has been a steady presence every Thursday, helping stock shelves and assist clients. This month, she coordinated with the Holyoke Senior Center to deliver personal care items from our Westfield location to their seniors. Doris always arrives with a smile and a positive attitude, often sharing creative recipes inspired by the produce and goods we provide. Her dedication and kindness brighten the day for everyone she meets.



**Would you like  
to Volunteer?**

We are looking for strong, reliable volunteers to help with the heavy lifting that keeps our pantries running, from loading and unloading trucks to stocking supplies. Your hands-on support makes it possible for Veterans and their families to receive the resources they need.



***VOLUNTEER!***

**Apply HERE! It's easy  
with our online  
application.**

# September Highlights

September was a month full of action, connection, and service at Project New Hope. Everywhere we went, our mission was clear: to stand with Veterans, families, and the communities that support them.

We began by continuing our Hydrate Our Heroes initiative, delivering truckloads of sports drinks, water, and snacks to local police and fire departments in Grafton, Millbury, Auburn, and Worcester. These visits were more than drop-offs; they were reminders to our first responders that their sacrifices are seen and valued.

Our commitment to food security was also at the forefront this month. With the generous support of partners like Goya Foods and the Boston Area Gleaners, we hosted Veterans' Farmers Markets at the Worcester VA Clinic and distributed thousands of pounds of produce and non-perishables through Sully's Veterans Food Pantry. Volunteers and staff rolled up their sleeves to sort, stock, and even share surplus with community organizations such as Pernet Family Health Service and Clear Path for Veterans New England. Together, we made sure no donation went to waste and no Veteran went hungry.

Connection was another powerful theme. Weekly Veterans Coffee Socials at our Worcester office, and monthly gatherings in Westfield, created space for camaraderie, laughter, and healing across generations of service. We were also honored to join the St. Francis Veterans' Café, where we shared stories and smiles with two remarkable World War II Veterans, one of them 100 years young. These moments remind us that no Veteran is forgotten, no matter their age or circumstance.

Outreach remained strong throughout the region. From The Big E's Military Appreciation Day to the Springfield Vet Center Cookout, from Indian Ranch's summer concert series to resource fairs at Fitchburg State University, Westover ARB, and Assumption College, our team connected with hundreds of Veterans, Service Members, and families. Each event gave us the chance to share our programs, offer resources, and listen to the stories that shape our community.

Finally, September called us to pause and honor. We marked POW/MIA Recognition Day, the anniversary of September 11, and the birthday of the U.S. Air Force with solemn gratitude and renewed commitment. These observances remind us why we do what we do: because freedom is not free, and because those who served deserve to be remembered, supported, and celebrated.

September was a busy month, but more than that, it was a month of impact. With your help, we continue to live out our promise: Where Veterans Rebuild with Honor.



# Gratitude in Action

## Grateful for Our Donors and Sponsors

This September, Project New Hope was reminded once again of the incredible generosity that sustains our mission. Every gift, every act of kindness, and every partnership helped us serve Veterans and their families with dignity and care.

The Auburn Angels set the tone for the month with a remarkable delivery of four carloads of non-perishable food to Sully's Veterans Food Pantry. Their quiet generosity, offered without expectation of recognition, embodied the true spirit of "Vets taking care of Vets." Goya Foods also stepped forward with a major donation of pantry staples, ensuring our shelves stayed stocked and families had access to nourishing meals.

Corporate partners continued to play a vital role. Walmart not only contributed \$2,000 to support our programs, but their employees also joined us in the pantry, lending their time and energy to serve over 140 Veterans and families. National Grid provided support raised through their own creative fundraising efforts, delivering their gift in person as a testament to their commitment. Allied Flooring & Paint, through their annual charity golf tournament, once again chose PNH as a beneficiary, helping us reach more families in need.

We were also proud to stand alongside the Highland Street Foundation as part of their Honoring Heroes 2025 initiative and grateful to Samuel Adams for assembling 200 Thanksgiving bags that will bring comfort to Veteran households this holiday season. Local schools and media outlets, including Leicester Public Schools, the Spencer New Leader, and FAMILY Magazine, amplified our work through stories and features, extending our reach to even more supporters.

These gifts of time, resources, and recognition remind us that we are not alone in this mission. When our community comes together — whether through a pantry donation, a corporate partnership, or a simple word of encouragement — we create a network of care that ensures no Veteran is forgotten. To every donor, sponsor, and friend who stood with us this month, we offer our deepest thanks.



# TCM Military & First Responders Retreat



**TCM Military & First Responders Retreat**

**November 6-10, 2025**      **Genesis Spiritual Life & Conf. Center**  
**Westfield, MA**

**Military and first responders often face immense emotional & psychological challenges due to the traumatic nature of their jobs. This can lead to mental health struggles including depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).**

The Cortina Method (TCM) resolves & dissolves these problem areas. Based on neuroscience, TCM is Brain-Based Healing that helps people process trauma, WITHOUT having to relive ANY pain.

Replace pain with joy, gratitude, relief, and excitement.

Enjoy Equine Therapy and holistic wellness of Yoga, Reiki, and Reflexology.

**10 openings - Complete your application TODAY!**  
Phone interview and Employment ID/ Military ID/ DD-214 required.



2025 RETREATS



**Project New Hope**  
Where Veterans Rebuild With Honor

[Click Here for Retreat Information & Registration.](#)

Veterans, Active Duty Military, and First Responders are invited to take a transformative step toward healing and resilience with workshops and therapies designed to resolve trauma, calm the mind, and regain joy. You answer the call for Americans 24 hours a day. This retreat is designed to provide a safe, supportive, and healing environment.

Everyone who attends will benefit from The Cortina Method (TCM), led by Trauma Resolution Expert Michael Cortina and his team. TCM helps resolve the trauma that leads to PTS, guilt, anger, fear, physical pain, or limiting beliefs. It offers a neuroscience-based solution for healing without requiring participants to relive any traumatic experiences.

Enjoy equine therapy, holistic yoga, Reiki, and reflexology, and other holistic wellness practices. Learn more about Michael Cortina and The Cortina Method at his website <https://michaelcortina.com/>.

Space is Limited: Only ten spots are available. Participants are responsible for arranging their own transportation to the retreat location.

After you submit your application, a Project New Hope team member will contact you to complete a phone interview, which is required to confirm attendance. Per the instructions during the phone interview, you will need to submit a copy of your employer identification card, military ID or DD214.

Lodging, meals, and activities are all provided at no cost to participants. There is a \$50 dollar registration fee that is refunded one week after the completion of the retreat. You must arrange your own transportation to and from Westfield, MA.

Please send questions to Sue at [smwilder@projectnewhopema.org](mailto:smwilder@projectnewhopema.org) or call (508) 762-9738.

Priority Enrollment:

First Responders/ Veterans or Current Military who have not attended a Project New Hope retreat will receive priority consideration.

Join us in taking this step toward healing, resilience, and rediscovering joy in life.

Start Date: Thursday, November 6, 2025

End Date: Sunday, November 10, 2025

Genesis Spiritual Life & Conference Center  
53 Mill Street, Westfield, MA 01085